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UWM institute defends lectures

Douglas McLain Jr., assistant director of the Institute of World Affairs at the University of Wisconsin — Milwaukee, has issued a statement denying that the institute has an improper relationship with the CIA or the US State Department.

About 30 protesters, led by top officers of the UWM Student Association, have repeatedly staged demonstrations at a lecture series currently underway and coordinated by the institute. The series is called Great Decisions.

In his statement, McLain deplored "the efforts of a small and unrepresentative group to besmirch the reputation" of the institute.

He said:

"These people allege that the programs of the Institute for World Affairs are biased and that the institute is directed by an agent or agents of the Central Intelligence Agency or that it is under the control of the Department of State."

McLain denied the charges and added:

"I acknowledge that the first four speakers in this year's Great Decisions series can be described as representatives of 'establishment' viewpoints: A Marine Corps colonel, a member of the Heritage Foundation's staff, a high-ranking official of the State Department and an Israeli scholar."

McLain said that over a season or two of the lecture series, "the subjects and our speakers represent divergent views and tend to even out, politically and ideologically."

In the recent past, McLain said, the Institute of World Affairs had presented a scholar critical of US policy in Central America, a debate between a State Department official and a representative of the Salvadoran Democratic Revolutionary Front, Moslems speaking on the Mideast, proponents of disarmament, and speakers of both liberal and conservative views.

In the Milwaukee area, the Great Decisions program is sponsored by the institute and The Milwaukee Journal in cooperation with the Milwaukee Public Library and the UWM radio station, WUWM-FM.